



The cover to the beloved DVDVR 167 is by the lovely and talented Bay Area artist Andrea Schneider.

EXCUSES FOR THIS BEING SO LATE: I could explain why it's been like eight months between DVDVRs but I thought it would be fun to put all my excuses in a YouTube video. Rippa says I look way too much like One Man Gang. Goddam Rippa.... [WATCH!](#)

BattiARTS 5/13/07
[DEAN RASMUSSEN]

One of the reasons Puroresu is in such a slump in recent years is because there aren't more promotions like late 90's BattlARTS and it's quasi-sister promotion Michinoku Pro. I mean, they are still around- as no Japanese wrestling organization ever truly goes away. But I mean having promotions where there are like five guys you really dig and the folks they wrestle are at least appealing to you because they are as adept at the particular esoteric wrestling style as the five guys you really dig. BattlARTS was the pinnacle. Yuki Ishikawa, Diasuke Ikeda, Alexander Otsuka, Minoru Tanaka, Mohammed Yone, that Usuda guy whose first name is already fading from my memory- all were guys I really looked forward to seeing. Here, the line-up pretty much tells you the problem with Indie Puroresu at the moment- THREE guys you really want to see, a lot of random indie folks gathered up because of connections eight years ago doing a favor and wrestling a little match that doesn't really have any meaning past the ropes, and bunch a young guys you gotta take a chance on. BattlARTS use to have compelling storylines and great fucking hard-edged angles that electrified me watching watching at home and the 340 people live at the multi-purpose center. But I am ahead of myself. Maybe this will be like the heady days of old. Maybe it will be like the crappy days of a few days ago. Let us enjoy the BattlARTS that young misanthropic Lenny dug up and then I'll try not to make snide comments about the old days that make me look like even more useless old fudd.

Ryuji Hijikata/ Brian Jack vs Ryuji Walter/ Hiroshi Kosakai: God, I should have gotten a BattlARTS flag by now. I'd wear it as a cape to work. WHO WOULD FUCK WITH ME?!? IT'S MY BATTLARTS FLAG, FUCKER!! WHAT DOES IT FUCKING LOOK LIKE?!?! I'm not sure what Ryuji Walter's gimmick is- I guess he is assuming the roll of a Southern American Sport's Bar Frequenter. Brian Jack has male pattern baldness but fearless leaves enough hair to let it show. He kicks really high and towers over the Japanese version of a Hertford County North Carolina Rascal Flatts shitkicker- a shitkicker with a Dragon's Screw and sloppy attempts at quasi-Volk Han carny submissions. Jack screams a lot to sell it so I dig him already- not that any of this is anything you want ever see so far. Hijikata is old school BattlARTS so he leans into Kosakai's kicks and tries to make a little sense out of the proceedings by sinking in a kneebar- allowing them to punch and headbutt each other while struggling in the submission- which i will always fucking love. So it becomes delightful for a minute. Jack is better beating down on Kosakai in the corner, as they go completely BATT BATT Does Mid-South old school tag match. Jack cuts off the ring and Hijikata is completely dicklike putting the screws to Kosakai before tagging out. Jack gets the comedy pop from headbutting Kosakai falling down backwards in agony just like Johnny Valentine would do after headbutting Rufus R Freighttrain Jones. Brian Jack is fun and isn't afraid to wrestle heel for no apparent reason. Yeah, Jack is awesome as the weasel on the apron. Kosakai punches to comeback but Hijikata cuts him off by kicking him pretty hard and tagging out but Kosakai ESCAPES and they kinda beat on Walter a bit until Walter gets in some pro style power moves and tags out. It very gently breaks down on the floor between Walter and Jack and it allows Kosakai to kick Hijikata in the face a batch to move straight into hitting a very nice Northern Lights suplex that Hijikata Yamazakis into a keylock. Kosakai accepts a mini-assbeating from Hij before kicking to offense only to tap to a kneebar. This was perfectly fine.

Yuta Yoshikawa vs Keita Yano: These are little fellas. They have very fauncy paunts. Kato Yano is wearing an aqua and pink surfer wetsuit type thing. Yoshikawa has aqua and black Doctor Strange Negative Zone pants. They flop around early, kicking here smacking there but nothing that leaves any real mark. Yano is more fun of the two because he drives his knee into Yuta's forehead when procuring a kneebar and scrapes his fist across Yuta's eyes when procuring a headlock. He also back elbows Yuta's head while going for the carney kneelock. Yuta knees Yano in the face and feigns a Muy Thai offense before sinking in the choke. Yano gets to his feet and sells the Yuta kicks like death- which is good. They kinda roll around and do crappy matwork until Yano drops the most hideous looking kneedrop you will see. Yuta responds by punting Yano in the face a couple times and this is really fucking fun. Yano sells the released backdrop driver but struggles to his feet. Yano is good and has real built-in babyface spunkiness that could take him far.

Kyoko Kimura vs Carlos Amano: This wasn't very good at the beginning but they get past the superfluous matwork and get things rolling by elbowing each other in the face to get the train rolling. Amano sets up the story that Kimura is dangerous striker and that Amano needs to use her submission skills to neutralize her. Kinda. It's got a lot goofy parts and the never establish Kimura as being able to beat the hell out of Amano and there are lots of crappy spots. I dunno. Kimura hits some nice power moves during the finishing sequences and Amano is fun fighting back from them so it's not like this was horrible, it's just kind of an pointless, heatless indie match that has nothing to really to distinguish itself in the spectrum of Joshi Puroresu.

(TOM KARRO-GARSNER: The thing that Amano v Kimura has to distinguish it from the rest of the spectrum of joshi is that Amano's face has gone from looking like a boy to looking like Bonnie Franklin on One Day at a Time. Kimura looks less like Mackenzie Phillips than Amano looks like Bonnie Franklin, but Kimura has pot leaf design on her boots. SO if you watch it as Japanese Joshi wrestling does One Day at a Time it kind of stands out more.)

Yuki Ishikawa vs Munenori Sawa: They start off by punching each other in the face- so yes, Sawa is definitely trained by the guy he is punching in the face. Ishikawa is getting too old for the bleach blond look- as he now appears to be supplementing his income by playing the Nick Rhodes part in a Japanese Duran Duran tribute band. Sawa hits the angry angry Shining Wizard and goes all schoolyard with the punches to the face on the ground. Ishikawa CRAVATES~! to escape and Ishikawa beats the living fucking dogpiss out of Sawa until Sawa can reverse it into a key-locky headscissor. Ishikawa crushes Sawa's skull with headbutts to make the escape and to make me COMPLETELY engorged- wrestlewise. Sawa does a People's Elbow? and Ishikawa opts to Cross-Arm Break for the affront to the Bat-Bat spirit. It finally evolves into an Ishikawa chinlock- which is like other chinlocks except I assume that Sawa wants to die while in this. Sawa kicks him to the floor with vim and vigour. They brawl on the floor like this is BattlARTS and YOU love THIS. It really is quality ass-stomping. You know who really fucking rules? Yuki Ishikawa. He is fun in this as he continually counters Sawa's offense with chinlocks and waikiki gay tommys and his offense is now basically punching you in the face- as he uses the sweet science to make the match more of the Memphis Sweet Science. Sawa is too highflying after the initial beatings are over- I mean a springboard elbow in

BattlARTS? He does give as good as he gets in the ass-beating sections so I chalk up his youthful exuberance in straying from the intense linear stylings of BattlARTS. Ishikawa with a kneebar. Oh God, do I love Yuki Ishikawa.

(Young Phil Schneider: Sawa also works as Liegere Muto on Indy shows, so the elbow drop and spring board elbows were him doing Muto spots. Doesn't make it better, but does make it make more sense.

TKG: yeah he does three Muta spots in a row as like a ode to his other indy gimmick.)

Why thank you, fellas.

Daisuke Ikeda/ Shuji Ishikawa vs Kyosuke Sasaki/ Tsuyoshi Kurihara: God, I need more BattlARTS in my life. Ya know, you try to ease off the Professional Wrestling because your second favorite wrestler slaughters his family a hundred wrestlers after it used to make you actually blink after hearing that a wrestler had died- and you don't realize how tough it is. I tried to supplement my wrestling veiwing time by getting into baseball and sports blogs and tried listening to sports talk radio and downloading bit torrents and reading more political blogs but that all fucking sucks. I quit drinking so it's no fun sitting around the fire pit in the back yard listening to the Washington Nationals night after night SOBER. Sports blogs and sports talk radio are so filled with total shithead fratboy idiocy and that hilarious ironic 20-something humour folks my age got sick of ten years ago. I think I'll stick with the pro wrestling. I'm too old, too married and too set in my habits to change this so I'll get back on the horse. And look it's motherfuckin Diasuke Ikeda to remind me why all other things suck ass in comparison. I looked up the other folks. Kyosuke is in Fu-Ten with Diasuke Ikeda. (And Tom K reminded me that he was the Kensuke Sasaki fan club president who wasn't afraid to take giant beatings in U-Style.) Tsuyoshi Kurihara is all over the Guts World results. Shuji Ishikawa is a Union Professional Wrestling Group superstar. I am torqued. As are you. First thing you take away from this match is Shuji Ishikawa is the biggest crowbar in the Japanese indies- as he really seem determined to break someone's rib or collapse an orbital socket. He and Sasaki start first and Ishikawa is six inches taller than everyone else in the match. God, Ishikawa lays in the forearms. Ikeda comes in takes it to the floor with Sasaki and they kinda do the W*ING wandering fistfight but there is a lot more kicking. Kurihara fearlessly kicks the fuck out of Ishikawa up against a garage door. Ikeda sells a wad for his Fut-En compadre to the detriment of Diasuke Ikeda beating the hell out of his compadre. Kurihara tries to kneebar Ikeda and you really missed out on this spot when Ikeda was NOAH undercard/invisible lowgrade indie owner- as Ikeda kicking his way out of a kneebar is a lot in terms glory and grandeur like the first time you see Niagra Falls from the Canadian side. Anyway, Ishikawa tags in and drops the nastiest fucking kneedrop I've seen in a WHILE. Right across the Adam's Apple. Then he fucking KILLS Kurihara in the corner with kicks. He tags to Ikeda and Ikeda gets in the spirit by beating the living dogshit out of Kurihara. Kurihara procures a rear mount to avoid pissing blood for three weeks. Kurihara tags out and Ikeda takes an assbeating from Sasaki and this match is truly fabulous. God, Ikeda will lean into a kick right in the face. But then Ikeda will expect you to stand there and lean into a straight right to the face- which just HAD to suck it. Goddamn I fuckin love Diasuke Ikeda. Ikeda drops his own hellish kneedrop for a five count. Ishikawa is such a total dick with his slow-motion front

facelock suplex. Sasaki finally kicks to transition and HORRENDOUS headbutts are delivered. Ishikawa will sit right in the corner and take a running knee to the teeth; I think I like him after all. The other thing you forgot about was that NOBODY is better at making a save in a tag match than Diasuke Ikeda. SOOO MUCH HATE. so much love.... Ikeda and Ishikawa hit a Doomsday Device but Kurihara comes with Fighting Spirit a-blazing and makes the save and makes with the underdog offense until Ikeda tags in and he starts beating on him. Ishikawa and Sasaki fight on the floor while Ikeda slaughterizes Kurihara with a lariat, a half-crab and then finally wins with an offhand headbutt. Odd ending, fabulous match in parts.

Yeah, you want this.

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PRO WRESTLING NOAH- 4/1/2007

[TOM KARRO-GARSNER, PHIL SCHNEIDER]

IZU/ Makoto Hashi vs Tsutomu Hirayanagi/ Mitsuo Momota:

TKG: Did Hashi lose a hair match? Where can I get the hair match? He had spectacular 97 Pimpenela fro-ed out hair and now it's gone. This felt more like a second match in than an opener. Everyone was solid and put in entertaining performances. The one problem I had with it was IZU's selling- as IZU really decided to work the match like a real traditional AJ match against a team of veteran/rookie. IZU sells for the rookie the way you do limited selling for a rookie teamed with Jumbo and then sells for Momota the way you sell for Jumbo. Hashi sells just enough for both, enough so you know where both guys are on the pecking order. Which makes the story IZU decides to tell seem even more distant from the rest of the match layout.

PAS: Both Hashi and Hirayanagi need to tone it down a bit in the opener. Hirayanagi did a rider kick off the apron, and Hashi did a headbutt off the apron to the floor. Both of which seemed like super big spots for what was ostensibly a comedy match. They also really ran through a complicated Dan Kroffat finish. Still Momota and IZU worked stiff enough that you could almost see this as a main event for Social Progress or something. I enjoyed it, but there is a reason opening matches are wrestled like opening matches.

Akira Taue/ Yoshinobu Kanemaru/ Shuhei Taniguchi vs Kentaro Shiga/ Kishin Kawabata/ Joe Legend:

PAS: Yikes on paper this looks terrible as there is only one good guy on each team. I like Taue and Kawabata a lot, but they aren't enough to save a trios match. As you would expect, their section against each other was clearly the best, with great clotheslines by Kawabata, and some nice big boots by Taue. The rest... was the rest though. Shiga and Kawabata have some nice double teams, but so did Rhythm and Blues and Shiga is really sub 90's Honkey Tonk Man at this point. Kanemaru looks Samoa Joe In TNA-level disillusioned at this point.

TKG: Maybe TNA and Noah need to do that talent trade. Taniguchi has some really great looking suplexes but so did Hogan and Tazz. Hogan and Tazz had better matwork. Joe Legend works a fast junior even mirror section with Kanemaru and also works an even Strong Style

heavyweight exchange section with Tanigiuchi. Huh? It's a trios match, stick to one character. Is his character a guy who mirrors the style of whoever he's in the ring with? He's working a Zelig gimmick?

PAS: Maybe a guy working a Zelig gimmick could main event a territory. Abby comes in and Legend stabs guys with forks, Les Thorton comes in and they work British mat sections, Rip Oliver comes in and you work test of strenghts. The drama could be built around whether your local hero has finally met his match, a guy he can't mimic.

TKG: You may be able to work on top of a territory as guy well rounded enough to have counter for anyone. You can't work like that in a trios match against Abby, Les Thorton, and Rip Oliver.

PAS: Also it isn't like Legend did any of his sections well.

Daniel Cross/ Bryan Danielson/ Ted DiBiase Jr. vs Mohammed Yone/ Taji Ishimori/ KENTA:

TKG: Daniel Cross looks like he's really developing into a good wrestler. When he first showed up he was guy who was doing Harley Raceish spots that looked iffy. But here pretty much everything he did looked crisp. He needs to work on his forearms. But by this point for a guy with questionable facial hair he smokes Brent Albright. Ishimori has a fun section with both Cross and Danielson and turning his goofy spring board back elbow into a back springboard tope is an awesome improvement. KENTA really looked like a guy with good spots running through them. Like Mr. Niebla on a houseshow(don't get me wrong, I'm not claiming that KENTA has cooler spots than Mr. Niebla). Still Danielson manages to have some good sections with Kenta. Yone's eat of the Cross off the shoulder inverted neckbreaker thing was pretty spectacular too.

PAS: Danielson looks really great here, as in every match he has been in so far on this tour, he is the guy who people have their best exchanges with. KENTA looked completely disinterested whenever he worked Cross or DiBiase, but kind of woke up opposite Dragon. Yone and Ishimori looked really awesome opposite Danielson too. DiBiase still isn't any good, his indy wrestling style Million Dollar Dream into a backbreaker really sucks. I wonder how he indy wrestlings up the loaded black glove? Loads his glove and does a face wash with it? Loads his glove and does Kobashi chops?

Tamon Honda/ Tsyoshi Kikuchi/ Yoshinari Ogawa vs Bison Smith/ Akitoshi Saito/ Masao Inoue:

TKG: I really loved this, and imagine if it was positioned in a main event could be absolutely spectacular. On paper the two guys who look out of place here are Ogawa and Bison Smith. Ogawa is often useless on a face team and Smith is often useless. But fuck it. Ogawa is really fun here as scummy face tag partner (role Kanemura played in Kanemura/Kikuchi tag team) and Smith never bothers me here. The opening Ogawa v Bison Smith sections were full on Bret vs. Magee great as Ogawa and Bison work through a whole series of arm wringer/twist variations and Ogawa bumps around for Bison's power. Kikuchi is a blast as "tough guy" and his sections opposite Inoue made me smile. Kikuchi is one of the best bottom babyfaces of all time, so his sections opposite Bison also are good. You'd expect having both Bison and Saito on team

together would have the two power guys canceling each other out, but instead Bison and Saito are really fun as fake Doom. Of course Honda and Akitoshi Saito always match up well and the Saito reversal of Olympic Hell had me bouncing out of my chair. The match didn't really have the hot end run finishing section it would need to make it spectacular but it was fun while it lasted.

PAS: Tom is right about this match really needing a hot finish. They built the opening really well, had a nice middle part and just kind of ended. It never really got the crowd heat that a real high end NOAH match normally has either. Honda really got screwed by Kobashi's cancer, he had the tag belts and was prepping up for a big run of main events, now he is floundering, and while he is still great in the thrown together six man tags, I want him heated up and ready for a run. It has been a while since Honda had a GHC title shot, he would make a way better contender than Smith. Fuck it, give him one of those goofy six month title reigns. Honda v. Morishima, v. Saito, v. Akyama would all be amazing.

Mushking Terry vs Testuhito Takiawa:

PAS: This was a match that I was really dreading, and for a minute or two my dread was undeserved, we got to the dread, but since I didn't hate all of it, it was better than expected. Takiawa can lay a beating on a guy, and really lays it on. Although there was a point, where the insane clotheslines began to become meaningless. By the time he beheads him the tenth time, why do you give a shit. The first nine didn't pin him, why do I give a shit about the tenth. I really liked Terry's code red and Aries crucifix bomb as pieces of fast guy offense that are brutal, but everything else he did looked shitty, especially all his suplexes. I think there are guys who Terry can have good title matches with, so I am not mad he got the belt, but oof this match.

TKG: I don't think the number of lariats and DVD were the problem with this match. Up until the last run of offense I got the sense that Terry was being worn down by cumulative damage. Problem with the match believe it or not was Takaiwa selling too much. I went into match thinking that I wouldn't need to worry about the usual Takaiwa "no selling" because Terry doesn't really have any offense nasty enough that it would piss me off if Takaiwa "no sold" it. But for some reason Takaiwa sold all of Mushking Terry's little hot comeback offense as though each thing was devastating. Sold roll ups as though they left him winded and disoriented. A roll up isn't headrop. Selling it like a headrop is nutty and fucks up the whole bully vs. underdog dynamic of the match.

CIMA/ Susumu Yokosuka/ Dragon Kid vs Ippie Ota/ Ricky Marvin/ Naomichi Marufuji:

TKG: I haven't watched Toryumon in ages and really the first 14 minutes of CIMA/Yokosuka/Dragon Kid work (opening dream mirror match ups with power guy matching power speed matching speed and ace vs. ace followed by the Team ToryuGate working over the NOAH rookie) really felt disjointed and kind of obsolete in the era of Rikochet, Chuck Taylor, Thomaselli brother vs. Marek Brave, Tyler Black, Thomaselli Brother. The first two minutes of the hot finish didn't do a ton for me. But the last two minutes of the please don't stop section were pretty fun and it ended right where it should have ended. No excessive near falls. Ricky Marvin does a great job eating a 619 and Black Terry is the only guy who should be allowed to do lung blower variations. Nothing really objectionable, fine meaningless 6 man NOAH

undercard tag minus the structure Kawabata normally brings to those things. Full worldwide point.

PAS: Dragon Kid isn't even a guy made obsolete by Ricochet, he is a guy who is still around even though he was made obsolete by Red. There were points during the middle, where you got the sense that the Toryuman team couldn't work against guys they weren't trained with. Hell the SAT's could have a good match with Devine/Storm, but also Da Hit Squad, Youth Gone Wild and 99 Briscoes. CIMA is still pretty charismatic and watching Marvin sell for DK's dated shit, I got the sense Marvin/Suzuki against Doi and Yossino could be really good.

Takeshi Rikio/ Jun Akiyama vs Yoshihiro Takayama/ Takashi Sugiyara:

PAS: The first ten minutes of this felt really flat, there was a fun Rikio v. Takayama Greco section, but outside of that not much. At about the ten minute mark Akiyama hits a running knee to Sugiyara's face and we really get rolling, and then the last 15 or so was really, really great. It was a match built around the worlds nastiest running knees and knee lifts, and there were points where every guy in this match had his running lights dimmed. I thought Akiyama actually got KO'ed at one point and they would have to stop the match. He in fact might have, but its Japan so the ref shook him awake and they kept going. Rikio may have looked the best out of anyone, he was drilling people with lariats, and all of his new Greco throws look great. They worked an elbow exchange with Akiyama and Sugiyara as a comedy spot early in the match, but then they do a slap exchange with Sugiyara and Rikio near the end which nicely played off of it. Like, it was all fun and games before, but now it is deadly serious.

TKG: Takayama has yet to have a really great post death match and it felt here like if he is going to have it, it's going to be opposite Rikio. Phil mentions their early Greco section but honestly anytime the two matched up it was magical. Well maybe not magical but they just worked really well together like longtime rivals. While Rikio looked like the best guy in the match, the match felt like it was built around putting Sugiyara over...as he was booked to look like the toughest bastard in the match. If Sano beats Misawa, Sugiyara seems like he should get the next title shot as the whole match was booked around making him look strong.

Mitsuhara Misawa vs Takuma Sano:

TKG: Holy shit does Misawa rule. Everything Sano does looks nasty. Well there are moments where his suplexes look almost too pretty. But the pretty suplexes still look like they land nasty. Both guys have great topes but Sano is the only one who gets to whip his out. There were parts of this where you felt like you were watching a caballera vs. caballera match between two maestros. But damn. I love Sano, but Misawa just is amazing. Amazing at selling everything. He takes a rolling savate kick to the heart like a heart punch, one to the kidneys like his prostate exploded, etc. At one point Sano seems to go for a meaningless leg lock. It's Misawa, not Kobashi. there is no need for a figure four. Misawa sells the next rolling savate kick like the leg work makes him fall quicker. At one point he takes this rolling savate kick and powers through it and the whole crowd loses it. It isn't a no sell so much as its "I think I know now what you have and I think I can take it" sell- as though he's testing himself to see if he can really power through. They've done a good enough job with the booking that the whole crowd popped everytime

Misawa was knocked to his knees. Anytime there was even the possibility of the kick to the head, the crowd started to murmur. Misawa took such a beating that I really didn't know what it was that he was going to do to get the win. When he got it with the fireman's carry into the neckbreaker thing it really felt flat to me. Did they have Daniel Cross debut Misawa's new finisher on a meaningless undercard match? And then not win with it? Maybe you fuck Sano's neck up with modifide neckbreaker thing and then Sano gets up unprepared for the elbow. Something. I don't want a 2.9 finish section, don't want lots of meaningless kickouts (one of the things that was neat about this match is how meaningful all the suplexes felt) but it needed something more at the end, something that the audience would immediately recognize as a finish. It was a blast of a match but a really unsatisfying finish.

PAS: Tom really covered a lot about the greatness of this match, and it was great. Misawa is amazing as Eastwood in Unforgiven. He had retired to a comfortable life on the farm of undercard six-mans, and he gets drawn back for one final gunfight. They did an amazing job in all of the set up matches establishing the spin kick to the head as a killer move. So the crowd was big into every time it was teased and Misawa really tried to avoid it. Unfortunately when it finally gets hit, Sano kind of hits him with the inner part of the leg, not with the foot. It sort of denied Sano the big hot nearfall he needed. The ending did feel really flat, Sano really beats on Misawa from pillar to post, and it really seems like he went down kind of early. The neckbreaker was pretty nasty looking, but Hirayanagi was kicking out of things that looked as bad in the opener.

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MICHINOKU PRO- FUKUMEN WORLD LEAGUE 2007- 8/30/2007-9/2/2007- Round one.

[DEAN RASMUSSEN]

Young Rika linked to this from the secret thing that's tied into the thing which you have to have a thing to get the thing. I think the last Michinoku Pro I watched had the endless array of guys wrestling with 75% of their buttcheeks hanging out. It was very disturbing. The opening credits are to "Sky High" by Jigsaw- but unlike Sky-Diving J from way back when- this is the original version, not the hep dance mix. Lights are turning green for me to like this already.

8/30 ROUND ONE!

Oh my god, Hayabusa addresses the crowd pre-tournament. He is still crippled and he must not have been given access to the internet because he is rocking the Micheal Vick jersey. Then again, I never really tried to figure out what a former Japanese death match worker's mindset would be in regards to an American sports millionaire throwing it all away for the barbaric thrill of facilitating dog fighting. The fact that Hayabusa threw away the ability to walk to compete in matches where they once stuck firecrackers up his butt, I guess it kinda makes sense.

Shibaten vs Yoshitsune: God, Shibaten's get-up is disturbing. He's kinda like what Disney-Pixar digital artistes would IMAGINEER~! Tortuga into. He's way too realistically a mutated tortoise and will make your skin crawl. He actually frightens a child at ringside. He does a bunch of

Sumo moves that I'm guessing are related to the tortoise motif in the Japanese culture. Then again it is Japan so it could be random as that guy being called Billy Kid Ken for whatever reason. I got no beef with El Blazer/Yoshitsune though I assume my fellow playaz don't dig him because he is basically a cross between Bart Connors and Jackie Chan. Replace Bart Connors with Kerri Strug because Yo is 5'2"ish. He does a lot of somersaults- though he had the perfect opportunity to do a homage to Hayabusa by doing a Tope Con Hilo onto Shibaten as he entered the ring like Hayabusa did to Lyger at the first Super J Cup. He does one pretty early- or I should say I assume it was pretty early; this was hacked down to 8 or so highspots- but either way, it wasn't as crazy and graceful as the man in the wheel chair could muster 13 years ago. Yoshitsune does a wacky dive off the balcony and I guess since this is a tourney about guys who bring highspots, he wanted to set the bar early. Then I remembered that amazing highflyer- New Jack- would do the same thing except through a table. So BAHH!

Olimpico vs Super Shisa: I'm not sure why you would have a juniors tournament and fly over a guy who is basically a thicker even-more roided-out version of WWE Title Run-era Brock Lesnar. But there you go. You wanted Olimpico, you got Olympico. He's not adjusting to his inflation level very well- as he stumbles around the ring and does the shittiest plancha off the apron in the history of Japanese people bizarrely filling up a good-sized arena to see juniors have a three day tournament. But yeah, folks turned out for this. Maybe the Japanese biz is in an upswing. Thankfully, they hacked this match to pieces for my pleasure. Super Shisa is fun and deserved better.

Mecha Mummy vs El Samurai: Sure, I love the sheer idiocy of the Mecha Mummy movement in the independent wrestling of the Japan- where else are you going to see a blue mummy and a yellow mummy take it to the floor of a produce warehouse in Osaka on a Friday night?- but you know, why are they getting El Samurai mixed up in this. The match itself is perfectly fine Survival Tobita-influenced goofballery- though it doesn't add to the El Samurai attempt at somewhat of a resurgence since I last saw him in MUGA (or something). I really dug the part where El Samurai stomps on Mecha's chest-embedded power supply and the evil manager/robotmaster brings out the mecha Lyger (who I am assuming was Kikuzawa). I SHALL NOT GIVE AWAY THE SURPRISE EVIL SECRET WEAPON MECHA LYGER UTILIZES! El Samurai does do a diving headbutt off the toprope onto Mecha Mummy. With Hayabusa in the audience, you would think that a veteran of El Samurai's caliber wouldn't risk breaking his neck in a first round tournament match against a man dressed as a mummy who is also a robot. Imagine explaining that to your grandkids. Eh whatchagonnado? More memorable than good.

Rasse vs Tiger's Mask: God, I watched this last night and was trying to outline everything at work and I kept getting Shibaten mixed up with everyone else on the card so I kept scouring the internet to figure out who would have the hideous tortoise gimmick and it was pretty enlightening to know that everybody under thirty on this card wrestles under about five separate gimmicks for whichever fly-by-night Dragon Gate offshoot decided to call that day. Rasse has a long and storied array of whimsical concepts thrust upon him like a model at a Spring runway show. Tiger's Mask has a belt and it is bejeweled. God, maybe it was the ham-fisted editing, but Lee

Scott got more offense against Terry Funk in the match where Lee Scott grabbed Funk's cowboy hat, put it on and did that little dance than Rasse gets in here. He get's in the mutually no-sold German, a few slaps, a roll-up and then eats a fuckin NASTY brainbuster for two. Tiger's Mask hits the Tiger Suplex hold and I'm guessing Rasse is far less the worse for wear than Lee Scott was. P'shaw.

Atlantis vs Super Delfin: Delfin uses the music he came out to in the 1995 Tokyo Dome 13 Promotions show and it is all-time fucking awesome. The booking stays aquatic as Atlantis makes his way to the ring, much to my delight. Atlantis fucking rules. The red mask is fucking AWWWWWWESOME. Atlantis beats the fuck out of Delfin early and EDIT TO TRANSITION! Delfin has the same offense he had in 1995 except he didn't pump handle Naniwa's arm accidentally at any point. He did whip out the Delfin Clutch and Atlantis counter's the Delfin shotay with TWO quebradoras. He then whips out the La Atlantida and they take it home. God, I deeply hope the full version of this is somewhere because the edited version makes Delfin look a lot like Eddy Jackie getting killed by a Nasty Boy on WCW Worldwide in 1994.

Kikutaro vs Tiger Mask IV: Kikutaro should have been like the Convict in the Michinoku Pro Mask Tournament in 1995- big, fat, agile, fun. Actually he is all that for a second here- especially when they trade roll-ups and then counters the kicks with the Dragonscrew and two count. Then the comedy kicks in and well... he's not the Convict and this ain't the 1995 Michinoku Pro Mask tournament.

Billy Ken Kid vs Jushyn "Thunder" Lyger: Billy Ken Kid has a lotta pretty highflying offense and Lyger is getting all old and girthy so he can be easily landed upon after Ken hits the NASTY dropkick to the face on the floor. Ken hits a Lyger Bomb and one assumes that Lyger will then destroy him and he does shotay the fudge out of the KID!- to transition to offense and kill him with a Genuine Lyger Bomb. Kid hits a top rope DDT for two, though Lyger actually sells it for a minute. Kid with the Augmented Air Raid Crash and misses hitting Lyger's own Shooting Star Press. Lyger hits a fucking gnarly Brainbuster- as if to say "My Shooting Star Press is soooo 1992." Kid is peppy with his underdog antics, while Lyger is old and masterful with his DESTROY YOU NOW OR LATER-BUT DESTROY YOU AND THEN I PUT THE BLAST ON ONE OF YOUR YOUNG MOIST BITCHES methodology of the Northern Lights Bomb and Spinning Sidewalk Slam and pin and the tourney is over for flyer boy.

Great Sasuke vs Ultimo Dragon: Hey, last time I remember these two squaring off, Sasuke broke his head (for the second time). I assume this will be Ryder Kickless but who could be sure? Ultimo is in Flag of Mexico regalia. Sasuke has the sleeveless outfit on with overly complicated mask over his traditional mask. Sasuke makes with the punches and the kicks and GOES FOR THE ASAI MOONSAULT! Asai stops him and goes for his own BUT SASUKE STOPS HIM! They brawl to the floor and the fact that these two actually hated each other for a few years makes this even more fun. Sasuke brawls like a motherfucker. Ultimo, not so much. Ultimo's kicks look crappy in comparison after he gets the drop on Sasuke by running the ropes all Luchalike. Ultimo does have a perfectly fine elbow drop and throws in a Calf Branding for old time's sake. Ultimo fucks up that Armbar Forward Rolling Roll-up thing and appears to- yes-

BREAK SASUKE'S HEAD AGAIN. They edit forward to Ultimo hitting a Silver king Drop kick out of the corner and Piscado that misses. Sasuke hits a FUCKING INSANE dropkick through the ropes to the floor and has to have crushed his head again. Sasuke hits an Old Man Tope Con Hilo and it fucking rules. I forgot that I fucking love the Great Sasuke. And on cue, he drops a fucking DiBiase level Fistdrop to seal our eternal love. Sasuke is an ass-stomper with crazy high-flying vestigally (ah, you know what I mean) attached. Ultimo finally hits the Asai Moonsault and this truly fucking delivers. Sasuke takes the crazy fucking bump of being vertically suplexed blindly through a row of chairs. Man, Sasuke IS the pinnacle of brawling. He was better than Necro-Butcher in the Briscoe match I went to last week. Ultimo ducks a Tope Con Hilo over the ring post and this cannot rule more (other than UD fucking up the roll-up thingy.) AND HE IDIOTICALLY HITS THE FUCKING RIDER KICK! Sasuke is motherfucking crazy. The Senton off the top was fucking beautiful but only gets Sasuke two. Sasuke follows up with body shots and Ultimo is fukt. Enzuigiris and bodyslams can't stop UD from dropkicking Sasuke's Quebrada. They trade nearfalls. Two Standing Buff Blockbusters and batch of kicks to set up a third and UD takes it. Fuck, Sasuke is motherfucking AWWWESOME in this.

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DVDVR ROAD REPORT ROH PPV TAPING- 10/7/2007, EDISON, NEW JERSEY

PAS= PHIL SCHNEIDER

TKG= TOM KARO-GARSNER

RN= ROB NAYLOR

DHR= DEAN RASMUSSEN

Playaz ALL!

DHR: My wife and I have a thousand little monetary compromises that keep our household harmonious and allows us to live with each other without actually her hitting me in the head with a shovel while I sleep. One is that I opted against the NFL Sunday Ticket because- well, I'm a Cowboy fan and face it- America wants to watch the Cowboys far more than they want to watch whatever crummy local team you want to see- so there is a REAL good chance that I will see all 16 regular season games, much less the inevitable cruise through the play-offs to win the superbowl, so great American Jerry Jones can put a ring on all four fingers, his thumb and- finally- his enormous Arkansas billionaire cock. We also allow me to live by me not asking for a car to replace my dead and donated-to-my-preacher/neighbor's homeless charity Mazda Protege. I have a company truck and we have a the Grand Caravan for our million kids so I instead just rent cars if I need some way out of the Chesterfield County. The best part of renting cars is the ANTICIPATION. Will it be cool? Will it be red? Will it smell funny? I recieved the awesome Mazda 3. It was Wheat/Tan colored so imagine my inner-revelry. It was also quasi-manual transmission which was fun. Later, after picking up Phil and Tom- who brought the usual esoteric alt.country/early 90s Bay area rap offshoot projects cds- Schneider notices that you can control the entire stereo from the steering wheel. I almost pass out from total erotic overload. I must get one of these cars. Or at least the steering wheel. GuNUHHHHH...

PAS: DEAN grabs Tomk and I from DC and we head up to scenic New Jersey for an ROH show, we hit the Edison Diner after a brief tour of the Orthodox neighborhood in Edison (GLOTT KOSHER SUSHI~!) After eating a repulsive amount of diner food, we get lost a little trying to follow the sun bleached signs of New Jersey we ended up getting to the show a bit late.

TKG: Dive restaurant that advertised glott kosher sushi and gyros with a Succah in the back. Jews are inventors of fusion cuisine. We eat at the Edison dinner where Phil starts shit with the waitress as he doesn't properly enunciate challah and we get an onion loaf instead. We get stuck in traffic and arrive during the end run of the womens match. Edison is pretty packed as per usual a large group of excited kids, and large group of wrestling nerds. I'm not sure if it's the move to PPV or they are doing better local advertisements but there also seemed to be a larger than usual contingent of Phil Baroni relatives. The addition of that much Dakkar Noir made the place smell better. But ROH really needs less douchebag chants, not more ethnically diverse douchebag chants.

DHR: The douchebag quota was pretty high at first glance but it was more of a IT Guy Masturbating To Rape Porn douche feel than a Guido Date Rapes 17 Year Old douche feel. Me and Phil love ROH because we always come off in the upper 10 percentile of thinness compared to the refrigerator-sized tentacle porn enthusiasts who surround us. Tom and Rob look completely emaciated in that crowd. You want to give them a sandwich or something. Later, Tom and I reminisce about ECW arena and that the fact that the average ROH crowd is a meeting of the Nobel Peace Prize Committee compared to the repulsive 50-something sausage-and-cheetos-scented sexual predators that packed the esteemed Philly bingo hall.

JIMMY JACOBS/ TYLER BLACK vs RUCKUS/JACK EVANS:

RN: Phil and Tom and DEAN didn't show up to see this, but I might as well give my two cents on it. It was just a quick sprint of a match. You had Evans getting beat up and Ruckus making a pretty great hot tag and cleaning house. This didn't go too long and the finish came when Evans went for an over the top rana on the floor and wound up getting his head and neck smashed on the rail... then a torture rack-turned back senton off top and a front choke led to the end. People around me thought the VS got buried, but I think they are a crew that can and will lose some matches, but pretty much never lose their heat. Plus, you got to put the AOTF over strong at this point. Seemed like maybe Jimmy is still taking it a bit easy and resting up his leg, so this tag worked in that way also.

DAIZEE vs DEL RAY:

RN: I was really surprised this was put on the PPV. It wasn't as good as other matches these two have had, simply cause it seemed both may have been nervous. People bitched about the last ppv being one dimensional to a degree, so having a women's match on this show kinda changed things up. Best part of the match was simply the angle it led to... leading us to:

CHRIS HERO vs BRYAN DANIELSON:

PAS: I enjoyed this a bunch, although it was definitely worked like a fun undercard match, rather than a big main event (which is exactly how it should have be worked.) I remember when this

was sort of an indy dream match, and I was let down by their IWA-MS series. I much prefer new-age John Tatum Chris Hero to angst filled mat wrestler Chris Hero. There was some classic horseshit in this match, I was loving the extraneous kip-ups. Dragon's new stomp your face finisher is fucking choice too. This absolutely gets the full Worldwide point.

TKG: This was really good as Chris Hero's horseshit stuff is hysterical and makes him a great foil for Dragon. As matched with Hero's chickenshit shtick Dragon went right into superserious bad ass mode and it worked perfectly. Dragon doing the insane leaping cocobutt in this type of undercard match seemed a bit excessive. But outside of that really fun match and I like getting over a ref stoppage.

RN: Yeah, this was my second favorite match on the show. Hero was really great. His flipping, leaping, kip up, tumbling schtick really is making every match of his must see. He gets so much out of doing so little also, in that he can stall like crazy and still get heat. A lot of bad guys on this show did some stalling, but really, only Hero was able to generate a whole lot of interest with the way he did his and played to the people. LOVED Hero doing a running Bob Backlund Atomic Spinecrusher on Danielson at one point. Danielson was really over too, don't get me wrong, but at the end of this match, I was just really glad we got Hero vs. AD instead of Quack vs. AD.

DHR: Eh, it was perfectly fine but the allure of Danielson is his horrific intensity. The fact that he is a fine comedy foil but it is very much like watching Yuki Ishikawa work a mixed tagteam. Yeah, it's funny watching him act all happy to be in right next to Yoshida's cooter in a cross-armbreaker, but you wouldn't drive ten hours to see it.

HANGMEN 3 vs KEVIN STEEN/ EL GENERICO/ DELIRIOUS:

PAS: Ugh. This was actively awful. Adam Pearce comes out and delivers a long promo which had the feel of a backyard guy doing fake James Mitchell "SHANE STYLES NOW IS THE TIME FOR YOU TO CHOOSE... YOU CAN STAND WITH DEVIL'S DISCIPLES OR WE SHALL SEND YOU TO THE DEPTHS OF HELL." Then Kevin Steen comes out and turns face, and they are apparently running with my idea of booking him as a Pedro Morales style regional babyface for fat pimply faced ROH fans. Steen is a pretty great heel, but a pretty shitty Ivan Putski. Then Hangman 3 do a long listless beatdown on Delirious, before a perfunctory hot tag by Steen. This was a stinker, and they should cut it from the PPV and never speak of the Hangman 3 again.

TKG: Does BJ Whitmer now have a hammer and sickle on his trunks? Why? You could find 15 guys working masked Russian Assassin gimmicks in Carolinas alone who could have done better heel beats face and cuts off ring work. I've liked Steen the last couple of times we've seen him when he was working heel- as he does a nice job coming across as an ass. As a face he's pretty much just a guy who whips out lots of hot moves. Opening Pearce mic work was sub-Motimer Plumbtree.

RN: See, I don't even understand what these two are talking about, as Steen really didn't turn good as much as just not become a Hangman. He wrestled the same cocky way and I thought

he was okay enough. Problem was, he was barely involved in this match, since he's injured. Generico at one point totally had people going apeshit on a combination of moves and he really looked great in this. The negatives.... is that Albright, Whitmer and to a lesser extent Pearce, all reallllly sucked the life out of this match. And Delirious is reallllly not over in certain cities ROH runs. In Chicago, he's over like crazy. Same with Philly. But in Jersey and NYC, he is significantly less over with the fans. Not sure why. This match didn't work, but Steen post match on the apron considering "hugging" Generico and Generico going for it and the fans cheering at Steen FINALLY accepting the Generico as an equal... and then Steen moving and Generico hugging air was hilarious. I saw this match as a way to get two guys that are injured but super over in ROH (Generico and Steen) involved on the PPV and hopefully elevate a bland act. It didn't work though. Hangman Three can leave wrestling tomorrow and I'd not be upset. And I'm nowhere near as much on the "BJ Whitmer sucks" bandwagon, but honestly, he's done all he can in ROH.

DHR: God, Pearce's punches sucked dick. I thought he was doing an old school Southern gimmick. If so, I see he is channelling Brian Lee in WWF as opposed to.. a Southern heel who can punch. As for Steen being Ivan Putski, his poorman's Asian Cougar 12,000 Variations On The Legdrop would make me think more of Scott Putski Going Cruiserweight. What a fucking waste of a legit heat-garnering wrestler. They should have turned him and gotten rid of the rest of the stable by slowly replacing each shitty Hangman with a random fat guy from the North Carolina indies. Other than that, perfectly A-OK.

AUSTIN ARIES vs RODERICK STRONG:

PAS: This was also pretty bad, and really really long. They had individual nice spots, but this really felt like a 2005 IWA-Mid South style indy dream match. Both guys did alot of things, and then it was over. Aries has a really great tope, and the brainbuster through the table was nice, but this never felt like it was going anywhere. They need to stop booking Strong in PPV singles match as it seems to bring out his worst tendencies.

TKG: There were moments where I liked this. Not really sure as to when exactly it hit the wall. But there was a pretty clear point where felt like it should have ended but instead they added 18 more minutes. Those last eighteen minutes were mind numbing. Nice opening sections with Ares in control, Strong posts Ares back and starts working back, Ares fights back Strong keeps on cutting him off with backbreakers, yadda yadda finish run. Nice little story arc, instead they went into sequel and I found myself constantly wondering "why isn't this over yet". Phil mentions the last Strong PPV singles match and this did have that sense of them putting in too many extra things to try to give match an epic feel. Didn't really need all of that extraneous stuff. The match didn't need Guerrero-Malenko roll ups, didn't need the big table spot. And all the extra stuff just felt really tacked on and shitty. They bring out a table, tease the table then ignore it for the next 13 minutes or so. It is 2007. They do about 13 minutes of big near falls, dives and fucking Malenko-Guerrero roll ups after they brought out the table. Once you take the table out, nobody pops for big near falls since they know finish will involve the table.

RN: I liked the last 13 minutes and actually didn't like the first 10, totally opposite of TomK. I just think all the wrestling in the first 10 didn't make sense. Didn't these two nearly kill each other in Philly in August? I mean, I figured they'd hit the ring and brawl immediately. As it was, the slow pace of the early portion of the match, just didn't work in Edison. Much like the slow starting pace of the match with Delirious died on the first PPV live. Not saying Strong isn't a good bad guy, but the longer his matches go, the more the crowd seems to drift out of things. This match will look weird to those watching the second PPV when Aries seemed like the most over person in the company. Here, he was over, but nowhere near to the point he was over on the second ppv. One thing I really liked about this match was them going to the floor and Strong trying to hit the Tiger Driver on the floor and it backfiring. . . basically a spot that was built up for about 9 months now on shows....but like, it got nothing near the pop it should have given how slow the first 12 minutes of the match went. Execution-wise, this was really good, but to me, a match has to engage the crowd and this match just took the people out of it based on the length of it. Bigtime error in judgement having this ...or really any match in Edison go over 20 minutes. The longer the ROH matches go these days, the less heat they seem to sustain. Tom was right in that when the table was set up, they waited far too long for it to pay off. Their idea was that they'd get an even BIGGER reaction when they finally got to the table...and that actually happened, but it just killed the nearfalls prior, which was a shame, as they were really well done.

DHR: The fucking Tope Suicida Lariat was sooo fucking the point where this match should have ended. Everything after that looked like a vertical suplex in comparison. Even the table spot looked like shit after that. And what was up with the table being established in the first five minutes? What is this, the Dudleys versus Danny Doring and Amish Roadkill? It really fucked up all the nearfalls as they said- as if the CZW Main Event 1999-level of nearfalls wasn't making me hate this post-tope anyway.

TKG: I can see Naylor thinking the last 13 minutes was the better match. Lots of matches that go too long lap themselves. This one didn't do that. This moved straight into a sequel. First 18 would have made a fine match second 13 would have made a fine match. Doing the match and the rematch, the movie and its sequel at the same time killed both of them.

NIGEL McGUINNESS vs TAKESHI MORISHIMA:

PAS: Their first Edison match was one of my favorite matches of the year, and while this wasn't as good as that, it was still violent fun. I loved all the early countering that Morishima was doing, he had wrestled McGuinness a bunch before and wasn't going to get caught by surprise again. After that it got into what we came to see, two big dudes hitting each other really hard. I got no problem with someone throwing a bunch of lariets, if they are good lariets, and Nigel was crushing Morishima with them. I had some problems with the multiple Morishima top rope moves, and I wasn't in love with the fighting spirit sell of the backdrop. Still the finish run was great, with Nigel's rapid fire slaps rulling, and the big rebound lariat being a finish. ROH has done a nice job making their belt mean something, as Nigel winning actually felt like a meaningful moment.

RN: THIS match was what Aries vs. Strong would have benefitted from looking like. Nigel just comes out and starts trying to kick the shit out of Morishima. No real wasted motion, just a fight. Big moves, Morishima cuts him off, but then Nigel wastes the fuck out of him with a hard lariat....rinse, repeat. It sure worked, as fans were with this pretty much bell to bell. Nigel at the finish using the lariats to the back of the neck really was sick and got to give Morishima, who's title reign I honestly thought was better than Danielson's overall, credit for really being great at making it seem like he was staying down for the change on at least a couple nearfalls here. One nearfall prior to the finish was among the loudest ROH has seen. Someone next to me at that point said "Imagine if he wins?" and then a minute later the roof came off the place for the new champ crowned. Awesome match, great moment and it's gonna look really good on PPV.

DHR: Oh man, this match was better than tennis porn. I have a few quibbles with selling here and too many Arn Anderson toprope spots by Morishima, but I really enjoy guys making you feel their pain and this was pretty motherfucking stiff. Actually, my problem with the match is that I wanted it to go another hour and a half- just because it would have an hour and forty-five minutes of what I like in professional wrestling.

TKG: Like Phil I really liked the opening Morishima evades the bounce back lariat stuff. Especially liked the Morishima avoids the on the floor variation which sent Nigel into the railing. I was almost disappointed that Morishima didn't point to his head "I'm too smart". Morishima as smart (almost slick) wrestler v Nigel as tough wrestler is a neat new story. I liked this a lot but think that may be one of the reasons that it was not as good as original match. Nigel as slick tough wrestler v monster is roles both play better. I was amused by Morishima going to top rope something like four times. The "loosing a title match means you have to go all out"= "lots of dives" is a weird value judgment on Morishima's part. Unlike Dean, I liked that a lot of them were countered as really if he's going to go that route he needs a wider variety of dives. Still a great big title match.

PAS: During intermission we find Naylor and I try to get him amped for the upcoming 80's Watts set.

RN: Yeah, iirc, I said hello to TomK and my good buddy Schneider hits me with a chokesleeper from behind that Adrian Adonis would have envied. Good to see DEAN~! as well, who is looking more and more like Tank Abbot every day.

DHR: During intermission, we notice that half the guys look like either me with an even bigger eating disorder or Pete Stein with a tremendous eating disorder. Rob is little and adorable and you want to hug him. You do.

JIGSAW vs CLAUDIO CASTOGNOLI:

PAS: This was a fun little match between two guys who clearly train together. I don't know about running a face v. face match, but these guys clearly have a ton of stuff that they can do with each other, alot of it is really nice looking. I was mainly just happy to see Julius Smokes back.

TKG: Your match to bring people back in after intermission is not going to get a lot of crowd heat to start with, and running face v face doesn't help. Claudio was super ver as face early in the night chasing off Sweeney's army. But the combination of Jack Evans and Smokes rallying the crowd as seconds and Jigsaw's ability to work underdog did lead to a bunch of "Let's go Jig" chants near the end. Putting Jigsaw in the Vulture Squad may be a mistake. Having Smokes running around ringside while a bunch of white Jersey folks yell "Let's go Jig" isn't going to look good on PPV.

RN: This match was real good, but again, it was good guy vs. good guy, so the reactions weren't as good as they could have been. I recommend people check out Jigsaw/Hero vs. CC/Nigel to see Jigsaw wrestle as a bad guy and people go apeshit when he gets his ass kicked. As it is, he's a killer underdog, so I'm not saying he should be a bad guy, just saying he's not one-dimensional. Smokes and Evans as cornermen may have been the best thing on the show. And Jigsaw really is consistently great in ROH.

DHR: This was classic Kevin Sullivan wrestling card variation booking and thus worked from that standpoint. It was really fun in an 1997 OMEGA Undercard Revival sort of way- as I love a good armdrag variation, BUT I would have liked it even more if it was where the Hero/Danielson match was and thus allowed the Hero/Danielson match to have more ass and hellfire behind it by moving it up the card.

DAVEY RICHARDS/ ROCKY ROMERO vs ERIK STEVENS/ MATT CROSS:

PAS: I came in to this show dreading this match, and it didn't start out bad at all, I actually liked the Davey Richards v. Erik Stevens sections. However it fell apart, at one point Cross nearly breaks his neck attempting a reverse rana on Richards, and then they do a million heatless two counts, and honestly this was a loser leaves town match where most of the crowd wanted them all gone. I like Erik Stevens a bunch, but they should have probably just had a double count out.

RN: This match was real good for awhile. Literally everyone looked real good for the first 12 minutes, with Stevens looking the best. Then, it just went on and on. This match tried to recreate the second PPV's opener with one less person on each side and toward the end, it just failed miserably. Davey Richards, Adam Pearce, BJ Whitmer and Albright ALL bore the shit out of me ... and most live ROH crowds. I really don't ever look forward to seeing them on shows. Richards looked real good early in this match, but by the end when he was doing the big injury angle on ES, you could have heard a pin drop. Here's hoping it's the end of The Resilience, as Stevens deserves some time off (they said he's off some shows now) and should come back with a new purpose.

DHR: I like this match waaaaaay more than I figured I would- all because I dig Erik Stevens and I dug the fact that he was pissing off all the smark rubes by NOT getting pinned. Fuck those douches- you go not get pinned young Erik! ROH lucks into these heat-garnering moments every now and then. The Xavier title run comes to mind. Don't let those sick fucks call your match, to paraphrase a certain one-eared gentleman who created the insider heat genre. The

other three had a bunch of roll-ups and their collective offense was very Nouvelle Young Guns-esque in comparison to the old school realness of Erik Stevens. I call the Matt Cross elimination early because I figured he was going to NOAH because read the board and thus I'm so fuckin inside the biz.

TKG: Marafuji saw Matt Cross and wants to bring him to NOAH? So I was questioning Morishima's wrestling judgment earlier...but ummm. Hey anyone remember when Zach Arnold used to bemoan Takayama and Suzuki being in major Japanese promotions and called them both "backyarders"? This did start better than I had expected but fell to pieces as ugly as expected. The constant match up of Romero and Cross amuses in a sick kind of way. Both of them land horribly on their heads during an attempted reverse rana spot. Richards got fucked up so badly that he just disappears for big chunks. Hard to do Cross as underdog near falls fighting against the odds stuff when his team looks to be playing man up.

NECRO BUTCHER vs JAY BRISCOE:

PAS: The Age of Fall's entrance music is women screaming, and I wonder how many erections that popped among the social degenerate Jersey ROH fans. Jay's new neck tattoo is #1 and the best. The match itself was pretty godamn great, both guys beat the everloving shit out of each other and I liked how they brawled to each part of the crowd, giving every fan a chance to get run over. Necro takes his requisite five insane bumps. Still the thing that ruled the most was their end of the match punch exchange, Necro's right hand looked Pavlikesque. Jay really needed to bring it a little more on the comeback, it's the Necro Butcher, punch him in the face. For a guy who a large minority of the ROH board hates, and works nothing like the ROH archtype style, it amuses me how often Necro Butcher works main events. I actually have to give Gabe some credit there, and I am all in favor of Necro mained ROH cards.

TKG: I assume Lacey is doing the opening screaming. She really does letter perfect Woman style caterwauling, which is kind of a creepy point to the sky, and well nobody wants to really think about Nancy screaming right now. Meanwhile holy fuck does Necro rule! I don't know about using him as a monster heel since, without channeling Randy Hales too much, Necro is just too sympathetic. Was the first nasty bump him the head bump from apron to floor? Maybe he's just sympathetic to me and not the ROH fan base. Still this was intense as all fuck. The crowd brawling was great, the giant bumps were insane.

RN: I didn't see a whole lot of this. Tried to stand on a chair at one point, but these guys were just all over the place fighting. Some real sick chairshots and the punch exchange was just amazing. I actually liked Jay's comeback... almost more than Necro's punches, just because you could tell Necro wasn't pulling his punches and Jay did a great job leaning back and just throwing real good haymakers. People reacted just as much to his worked stuff as they did to Necro's legit punches. Again, can't give too much of an opinion on this, given I couldn't see a ton of shit they did, but it was really brutal from what I did see.

DHR: This match was fucking awesome. I love it when you gotta make it look legit 2 feet from my eyes- and they did it by beating the fuck out of each other all through the crowd. Necro was bleeding from four places and was oozing something from his leg. It was awesome. Briscoe was punching Necro right in the puddle of blood on his head and splattered blood into the air. I tried to hide behind a gigantic comic-reading manchild standing on a chair in front of me. It's not that I think that Necro's blood would eat through my skin but- c'mon, he's swapped blood with a hundred pro wrestlers. I read the sleaze thread back in the dead. I got kids to raise. Please note that when the lights went out, Iliiii was the first one to shout, "SABU!" Rube copycats...

TKG: I avoided the urge to yell "No not Midnight". dean has less self control.

PAS: We drive back to DC, and I murder Tomk and Dean in the stable naming driving game. NO ONE KNOWS MORE MEMBERS OF DEVASTATION INC. THEN ME. I AM A CHAMPION!

DHR: I got completely slaughtered- mostly because Schneider is a freak and Tom is also a freak. Their Stud Stable knowledge would fill any normal man with sheer terror. If Naylor was there, we would have achieved a level of wrestling minutae total dorkdom so immense that you would be able to detect it from Alpha Centauri. I was also very old and my memory was fading. There is nothing better than arguing at 3 in the morning over whether Blackman and Kendo are actually Black fellas.

PAS: It is pretty hard to criticize a show with two matches as good as Necro v. Jay and Morishima v. Nigel, but I think this is going to be a rough PPV. The middle section with the Hangman 3 and Aries v. Strong is just slow death, and I am not sure if the main event is going to rehab it. Depending on how good the opener we didn't see is, this will still be better than the first PPV, still they really should be putting on the AOF stuff which is easily the most compelling thing that ROH is doing. I like Nigel a ton, but I just don't see a bunch of money matches for him as champion. Outside of Nigel v. Necro there really isn't much that hasn't been seen alot. I could see ROH hitting a bit of a downslide unless they can figure out a new direction.

TKG: I think Am Dragon v Hero will look even better on PPV. And the long patch of ugliness that is the Hangman's three six man followed by Strong v Aries can be broken up with some backstage segments. Coming up with challengers for your new champ is always a problem. ROH really didn't know what to do with Aries after giving him the belt. It sometimes feels like WWE runs a number one contender battle royale every month. That said, I think there are more challengers in wing than Phil suggests. I'm not sure how Aries v Nigel will work. I don't think crowd is burned out on Nigel v Dragon. I think Nigel v AOF could provide some good stuff. Jacobs as Sullivan regimicking Cody Hawk or just about anyone as Magenta Haze would entertain me and I don't think the size difference would hurt Jacobs v Nigel that much. It doesn't excite me a ton but I imagine they will run Marafuji v Nigel. I assume Noah will be sending some more rookies for seasoning (Go maybe, Taniguchi, etc.) and I assume there will be more guys walking out of TNA. I'm an optimist. Dragon v Hero, Necro match, the title match and me

winning the name the most members of Jimmy Hart's First Family competition the all left me feeling happy and optimistic.

DHR: I drove ten hours and would say that the Morishima match and Necro match were very much worth the investment. Yeah, the rest was pretty pedestrian in comparison but I got to hang out Tom and Phil and then Rob and see two awesome wrestling matches. And we ate enough food at the Edison diner to feed four Satan Pros so it was quite a fat ass big time.

THE DEATH VALLEY PLAYAZ.

~%~

MICHINOKU PRO- FUKUMEN WORLD LEAGUE 2007- 8/30/2007-9/2/2007- Round two.

[DEAN RASMUSSEN]

El Samurai vs Atlantis: They edit right at the Samurai Scorpion Deathdrop so who knows what the first five minutes entailed. Atlantis sells the hammerlock like he's been there. Atlantis procures the Vertical La Atlantida and BOY! was that disappointingly clipped to nothing.

Olympico vs Tigermask 4: Awesome! Atlantis saves us from the crappiness that would be this match by showing up and being Olympico's bastard second. And then they edit the rest and we escape unharmed.

Ultimo Dragon vs Tiger's Mask: This wasn't long enough to get over the upset aspect of Tiger's Mask advancing over UD, but I was still pissed off that Sasuke wasn't going any farther. So fuck this match sideways. SASUKE~!

Jyushin "Thunder" Lyger vs Yoshitsune: Yoshitsune is really fucking spectacular and his dropkick off the ramp into the ring into the Tope Con Hilo into Flying Space Tiger Drop is pretty fucking great. But Sasuke smoked him two matches earlier. But I shall now move on. Yo does lean into a Shotay like a man and Lyger does fucking destroy him after his initial flurry. The toprope Mortal was too goofy to facilitate this choad going over Lyger. Lyger stalks off. Sasuke is very proud of his boy though- and that makes it easier to take, I guess.

SEMI-FINALS!

Tiger Mask 4 vs Tiger's Mask: TM4 kicks T'sM right in the face a few times. Other than that, a perfectly fine Wrestle Land undercard match. The battle for the Tiger Suplex Hold was neat, I guess. Eh.

Yoshitsune vs Atlantis: Yo bounces around early but Atlantis puts the boots to him and works the back in fun and innovative ways and makes it a really fun match. Olympico makes this even more fun by distracting the ref to allow Atlantis to escape some sloppy tumbly high spots and get back to the business of beating some heat onto the babyface. The crowd is waaay behind Yo and it's all the Rudoing of Atlantis creating the match so they can get behind Yo's comeback.

Atlantis is just fucking nasty on offense and I'm actually surprised he went over. It looked like they were beating on Yo enough to make for a pretty big 'n' hot comeback and make with the molten underdog win. Either way, the best Yoshitsune match in the tourney and I credit Atlantis for the backbone of it.

FINAL!

Atlantis vs TigerMask 4: TM4 is the least exciting guy for me in this tourney and his matches appear through the haze of massive editing to be the most lacklustre. If he can't fired up Atlantis then fuck this guy. Olympico and Atlantis cheat like motherfuckers and, yes, I love it. Atlantis is full-on raging rudo in this and the crowd gets into it. TM4 finally wakes up and starts fighting with some passion, though Atlantis cuts him off and beats the shit out of him some more. TM4 hits a tope and plancha and Olympico stomps the piss out of him on the floor and this is fucking great. Atlantis battles back from a missile dropkick to hit dual Quebradoras and UN FOULE! and a lariat and you love Atlantis all over again. Olympico saves Atlantis from a TM4 COBRA TWIST~! and Atlantis forearmms Olympico accidentally and TM4 is a Cross Armbreaker away from victory. I want the whole match- but what we got was pretty much a peck of fun.

Overall, Sasuke gave the best performance. Atlantis was a good idea- especially for carrying Yoshitsune. Word has it that the whole version will probably never make the shores of the US but one can only hope. That was fun.

~!~

Phil SCHNEIDER's Ongoing 2007 MOTY LIST

1. Nigel McGuinness vs Samoa Joe ROH 3/3
2. John Cena vs Umaga WWE 1/28
3. Nigel McGuinness vs Takeshi Morishima ROH 4/14
4. Chris Harris vs James Storm TNA 5/13
5. Jimmy Jacobs vs B.J. Whitmer ROH 3/4
6. Samoa Joe vs Takeshi Morishima ROH 2/16
7. Matt Hardy vs Finlay WWE 6/19
8. Shawn Micheals vs John Cena WWE 4/23
9. Jimmy Jacobs vs B.J. Whitmer ROH 3/31
10. Solar 1/Mano Negra vs Negro Navarro/Black Terry Lucha Libre VIP 3/10
11. MNM vs Hardy Boyz WWE 1/28
12. Briscoes vs Ricky Marvin/Kontaro Suzuki NOAH 1/21
13. Bryan Danielson/Takeshi Morishima vs KENTA/Nigel McGuinness ROH 5/12
14. John Cena vs Great Khali 5/20
15. Mitsuhara Misawa vs Bison Smith NOAH 6/3
16. John Cena vs King Booker vs Bobby Lashley vs Mick Foley vs Randy Orton WWE 6/24
17. Briscoes vs Murder City Machine Guns ROH 4/28
18. Finlay vs Undertaker 3/6 WWE

19. Briscoes vs Kevin Steen/El Generico ROH 4/14
20. Colt Cabana vs Jimmy Jacobs ROH 2/24
21. Takeshi Sasaki vs Yuki Miyamoto BJW 3/14
22. John Cena vs Shawn Michaels WWE 4/1
23. Shinjiro Ohtani/Takao Omori/Kazunari Murakami vs Kohei Sato/Hirofumi Takahashi/Yoshiro Takayama Zero 1 1/19
24. Matt Sydal vs The Man Gravity Forgot PAC ROH 3/4
25. Davey Richards/Roderick Strong vs Jack Evans/Delirious ROH 4/14

Previously on the list

- Necro Butcher vs Toby Klien CZW 1/13
 Chris Benoit vs Chavo Guerrero WWE 1/16
 BJ Whitmer vs Jimmy Jacobs ROH 1/27
 Nigel McGuinness vs Jimmy Rave ROH 3/4
 Matt Hardy vs Ken Kennedy WWE 3/13
 Samoa Joe vs Eddie Kingston FSM 3/17
 Takeshi Morishima/Mohammed Yone vs Jun Akiyama/Takeshi Rikio NOAH 4/1
 Undertaker vs Batista WWE 4/1
 Chris Benoit vs MVP 4/10
 Yuji Nagata vs Hiroshi Tanahashi NJ 4/13
 Mitsuhashi Misawa vs Takuma Sano NOAH 4/28
 John Cena vs Great Khali v. Umaga WWE 6/4

 (Please note that Phil has been writing these non-stop at Segunda Caida so some of these may seem slightly dated. I take full responsibility for having another lull in DVDVR production.- Dean.)

1. Nigel McGuinness vs Samoa Joe ROH 3/3: Nigel is a guy who I first noticed in IWA-MS as maybe the first indy guy to do old Johnny Saint spots. When he was the only guy doing it, it was pretty awesome. Then it became an indy cliché, as you would get cards with Lady in the Lake in every match. Nigel though has really changed his style completely, as he is now a guy who does some very simple things, very well. He has a set of good looking offense, and bunches of different ways to hit it, and bunches of ways to have it countered. A lot of this match was built around Nigel setting up the Tower of London and the rebound lariat, and Joe finding different ways to work around it. All that stuff was great, but what made this match was two big dudes pounding the shit out of each other. Nigel is Hansen level killing people with clotheslines now, and the outside the ring rebound lariat he does was sick. Plus he apparently has decided that home country appearances are going to be all about sick bumps. Joe whips him head first into a post, and muscle busters him on the ring apron, both of which were totally insane. Joe is really great here too, as he knows he is going to be stuck working Rhino in three minute matches for the next 2 years, so he goes out with a bang.

The finish was really great, Joe hits the insane looking apron muscle buster, and the refs come out to help an unconscious Nigel. Then you have the really cool in match angle, where Nigel is

being carried to the back, and Joe calls him out over the mike. "Come back and shake my hand you British pussy." The in match restart seems to also be a British Nigel match specialty, and when he comes into the ring the crowd, which had been split, gets totally behind him, and they have a great final run. I especially loved the one big Nigel nearfall, as he had been setting up the rebound lariat, and he bounds off the ropes, but instead of going for a clothesline, he does a slick little roll up. Nigel really needs to be the guy who takes the title off of Morishima, he is the best guy on the indies right now, and would have a spectacular title run.

3. Nigel McGuinness vs Takeshi Morishima ROH 4/14: I had been down on Morishima a bit as I really hated both his KENTA and his Homicide matches. Working juniors you almost got the sense he almost works as a tall fat junior, and he is a shitty giant Super Astro. Here though he was in there with another heavyweight so you actually bought him eating offense, and he wasn't doing mirror sections with guys half his size. He was also great using his weight, as he had nifty variations of fat guy sit downs. Him crushing Nigel on the apron was amazing and it really looked like Nigel was going to allow himself to be paralyzed to add drama to his title match. I love how McGuinness has simplified his stuff, and his lariat variation were spectacular. They had really established the rebound clothesline as a killer, and I loved how it kept getting cut off, until he finally hit it. I knew that they wouldn't give Nigel the belt yet, but I believed that was the finish. This had a little bit of NOAHing up, but I kind of mind it less when it is a monster like Morishima, he really should be booked as larger than life, so when he shrugs off something, it makes it mean more when he finally sells.

4. Chris Harris vs James Storm TNA 5/13: I have been watching TNA off and on from the beginning of the promotion and for the most part it has been a steaming cauldron of liquid shit. AMW have been some of the only exceptions, they are a pair of guys who started in a Prentice fed so they had plenty of opportunities to wrestle Well Dunn and and Wolfie D and learn how to work. They were really great as a babyface tag team, although they weren't as good in Orlando as they were in Nashville, I had mixed feelings going into this match, I had some confidence in both guys, but it is Russo TNA, plus tag team explodes matches usually are disappointing. I liked Gibson v. Morton okay, but I can't really think of any matches that were great. Here is the exception that proved the rule, as this was spectacular. Sometimes Texas Death matches can be hurt by having too many falls, but here every fall felt like it should end the match. Plus unlike a lot of current feud brawls, this really felt like a fight, this was the best I have ever seen Harris's punches look for example. The catapult into the bottom of the table was crazy and the pools of blood were sick. I also really loved the finish with both guys throwing bottle shots at the same time and Harris hitting first. The quicker and straighter shots will land first, and getting hit while you are throwing a punch is exactly how you get KO'ed, plus the bottle and all.

6. Samoa Joe vs Takeshi Morishima ROH 2/16: This was much more of WAR style heavyweight slugfest than the epic title match style of the McGuinness match. A pair of big dudes pounding on each other. In some ways this was a really good way to introduce Morishima. He doesn't work well with juniors at all, but has always been good at this kind of nose to nose asskicking match. I remember loving a Takeshi v. Takeshi match from four years ago. Joe hasn't had a ton of matches like this, but he was great here, and I got the sense that he would have had a great

match against Tenryu if TNA didn't fuck it up. Joe is also really good at working the role of top guy, as Morishima has to come in and make his bones against the toughest they have. Still I did think Joe was a little too dominant, which is why this is a bit lower on the list. Morishima never really got the big near falls, you never got the sense that Joe was close to losing. He worked this more like he worked Kingston or Necro, where Morishima comes off tough for being able to hang with Joe, but clearly a notch below him. That really isn't the way you want him to look right before his run as dominant champion.

7. Matt Hardy vs Finlay WWE 6/19: Matt Hardy has really developed a great TV match formula in the first half of the year. A batch of hot offense, he injures a body part, the heel works over the body part, Hardy does a great job of selling, and then he pulls out a flash win. It is pretty much a formula you can use with anyone half decent and have a good match. Hardy plays the role great, he is probably the best seller in the WWE outside of maybe Cena, and his offense is simple and looks good. When you plug a master like Finlay into the formula you are really going to have a treat. Finlay is spectacular here, going after the leg, everything he does is with force and violence and I am loving the indian death lock as a secondary finisher, maybe it is a shout out to Princess Paula.

8. Jimmy Jacobs vs B.J. Whitmer ROH 3/31: I was anticipating this match as much as any match I can remember, so I was bound to be a little disappointed. Jacobs was spectacular as usual, as he is really the only guy fucking with Cena for the first part of 2007. Much like the Cabana match this started out amazing, but seemed to fall a little flat. The Frye/Takayama spot with the spikes was one of my favorite spots in the history of the promotion, just so awesome and violent. Jacobs' creepy blood fetish stuff was super too, licking Whitmer's face, combing his hair with the barbed wire bat, stabbing himself with the spike, just gruesome. Plus those fucking tights with one crying eye and one bleeding eye were just off the chain, if it wouldn't effect my burial, I would get that as a tattoo. The senton from the top of the cage is a hell of a way to finish the feud and both guys looked completely destroyed. Still this match had some problems. Having Nick Diaz come from the back with weapons to slide into the cage was terrible, both guys have seconds, they could certainly grab things from the bottom of the ring. You would think if Diaz was going to bring them anything it would be a one hitter so they wouldn't feel pain. This was also the first match of the series where Whitmer was all Whitmerish. He busted out his shitty suplex combinations, and there were parts of the match where it felt like they were doing a "hot indy wrestling 2.9 section." Which is exactly the wrong thing for a match like this. Still in a year with a bunch of spectacular brawls this was right up there with them.

9. Jimmy Jacobs vs B.J. Whitmer ROH 3/4: The first third of the year was Jimmy Jacobs time. They had been building his feuds with Whitmer and Cabana for months, and he had been the best character in wrestling for most of 2006. Then they wrap it all up in the first part of 2007 and he gets to absolutely rule it in the ring. I haven't watched the cage match yet, but this was the best of the Jacobs brawls so far. This was a falls count anywhere match, and Jacobs gets thrown through everything in the arena. He goes through chairs, down the bar knocking over drinks, head over heels down stairs. He pretty much touches every part of the arena with his head. Jimmy also does a crazy looking plancha off the balcony. When they get into the ring,

they have the great Shiek sections of ever Jacobs brawl, where he stabs Whitmer in the head, and then wipes his face in Whitmers blood, and lays underneath Whitmers bleeding head and yells "BLEED ON ME BJ". It feels less like a move to gross out the fans, then something a legit depressed cutter emo kid would do in a fight. Whitmer was along for the ride, but much like their January match did nothing to irritate me. I would love to see Jacobs in a feud with a top notch brawler like Necro or Homicide, but BJ at least didn't fuck it up. Your finish run was nasty enough to buy it ending the match, but not so nasty that it felt like a feud ender. Man I can't wait to watch that cage match.

13. Bryan Danielson/Takeshi Morishima vs KENTA/Nigel McGuinness ROH 5/12: This was a blow away main event of an otherwise crappy PPV. I have read people complain about Nigel just throwing lariats, but I am a Choshu fan, nothing wrong with simplifying what you do, if you do it well, and Nigel was killing people with lariats here, from all angles. Nigel's big match restarts are always fun, and I loved him coming back in with the taped up arm, and the jawbreaker with the bad arm was a great near fall. You kind of forget how good Danielson is, but he was amazing here. KENTA and McGuinness are two of his best opponents, and all of their interactions were great. The multiple reversal finish is a staple of indy wrestling, but Danielson may be the only guy who can really pull it off. The whole finish section with KENTA was completely awesome. The match wasn't perfect, for guys who trained together and work constantly KENTA and Morishima don't interact well, and the points where they were matched up were the weakest parts.

14. John Cena vs Great Khali 5/20: I remember when Khali came in, he did this destruction of Undertaker which looked super shitty, as his stuff didn't look violent at all. I think may have improved a bit, but Cena made him look like a total killer. Just taking giant bumps on all of the moves. They weren't Hennig or Micheals style athletic bumps which are all about the bumper, they were the kind of whiplash bumps that make the guy applying the move look like a total monster. Cena is also amazing at timing all of his comebacks, as the crowd went nuts for the catch of the chop, and the shoulderblocks, the finish was real great. I don't know about Khali tapping out in the first match, but they set it up really well. I get the sense Khali may be unable to take a bump, so kicking the stairs into the knee, and landing a legdrop is devastating enough to buy the STFU being put on. I am really straining my mind to think of a more impressive carry job then this. Fujinami v. pre WCW Sid was great, but wasn't as good, Savage v. Rodman and Bigelow v. Taylor were awesome too, but at least those guys were athletic. This really does need to end all arguments about Cena.

15. Mitsuhashi Misawa vs Bison Smith NOAH 6/3: I was down right shocked at how much I enjoyed this match. I really loved Misawa in his matches against Sano and Sugiara. He plays the role of a broken down old Samurai trying to will his body into one more battle, he wants to pass the torch but no one will take it. It is a cool role, and he is incredible in it. Still its Bison Smith, outside of a 2001 match I saw live against Donovan Morgan, and some fun UPW tags with Luminous Warrior against Orlando and Marquis Jordan, he kind of always sucked. No real reason to think that broken down Misawa could drag him to anything. Boy was I wrong Not only was this good, it wasn't a great wrestler dragging a shitty guy to a good match (like Jacobs v.

Whitmer or Cena v. Michaels), Smith was right there wrestling the match of his life. Misawa is overpowered early but uses his guile to injure Smith's leg. Smith does a pretty good job of selling this (I saw him fake a knee injury as part of an APW political play during the King of the Indies tourney, so I knew he could sell), but still is able to throw around Misawa. He press slams him from the ring to the apron, which was a totally crazy bump, and also hits some really great shoulder blocks, including a tope from the ring floor over the rail onto a seated Misawa, easily the best I have ever seen Smith look. Still this was all about Misawa's selling. They tease two countouts, one after the press slam to the ramp, and one after the tope into the stairs, and both times Misawa just lies there until the count gets to 15 or so, then he takes this deep breath, and rejoins the battle. He wants nothing more than to lay down his sword, but something keeps him going. I also loved the finish, Misawa is able to catch Smith and reverse him into a second rope Emerald Frosion (which was the only sequence in this match which didn't look good), and then he pounces, he has been conserving his energy for this moment, and he just pounds on a weakened Smith, until he finishes him with a nasty elbow to the back of his head. Misawa is still totally awesome, but I don't think that it will translate well to his ROH stuff. Although if Misawa can have a match this good with Bison Smith, Misawa v. Joe should be insane.

16. John Cena vs King Booker vs Bobby Lashley vs Mick Foley vs Randy Orton WWE 6/24: You X division cluster isn't really my style, but when you replace interchangeable Sonjay Duttish guys with big hard hitting over heavyweights it can be pretty damn fun. Cena is the wrestler of the year, but he works well in long matches where he can sell and build to big spots, this isn't that kind of match so he really was incidental. Lashley was a monster here, chucking people around, taking big bumps and delivering an absolutely spectacular tope. Foley takes a couple of nice bumps and is over enough to not do a ton, I did love him throwing socko to the crowd and grabbing a chair to waste people. Booker and Orton were the only heels here, and were just awesome, Booker was just reeking people with knees, and was the guy in this match doing the lions share of the work. Orton may be the best wrestler in the world at timing big spots, and his countering of the five knuckle shuffle into an RKO was perfect. Finishing run was great, as all four guys stuff is so over, that all the near falls were big.

17. Briscoes vs Murder City Machine Guns ROH 4/28: Briscoes are guys with a pretty set formula, the formula is what it is, and you will tend to get what you get from it. The PPV tag against Sydal/Claudio was a pretty basic example of the formula. Some time killish stuff at the beginning, leading into some big crazy spots at the end, about half the time the match ends on time, half the time it goes a bit too long. If the formula is hitting on cylinders it can be pretty entertaining, but it rarely moves into excellent. What separated this match from your standard Briscoes match, was a load of quality bullshit by the Murder City Machine Guns. The first part of the match which is often the Briscoes weak point, was filled with a Shelly and Sabin homage to every cheap heel stooge in the book. All of that stuff got me into the match, so when they start with their big finish (and it was a great finish run) it wasn't just a collection of cool looking stuff, but I actually cared.

18. Finlay vs Undertaker 3/6 WWE: Finlay cuts a promo before this match claiming to show no fear of the Undertaker. Usually that means the guy cutting the promo will end up making

cooning terrified faces, but Finlay actually wrestles the match like he isn't afraid. This was pretty much a slugfest, like Undertaker v. Batista, but with better slugging. I have never seen the Undertakers punches look better, and I assume that is because of Finlay was leaning in. You actually kind of buy this guy as the best pure striker in WWE history. The other crazy thing about this is how good the Undertaker's selling was. Finlay's offense was built around working over Taker's ribs and everything he did was labored, he still executed his moves but he had clearly fight through the pain. Finlay even gets a visual pin on Undertaker which is pretty unprecedented. Finlay hasn't really had the opportunities this year, like he had in 2006, but when he does get a chance to go 20, you can still see how awesome he is. Also super in shape Undertaker is really creepy looking, he has the tan and definition, but with an old man face, he looks way more like current Vince then someone who is actually scary looking. Would the personification of death really be this cut? Are their Ballys Total Fitness in Hell?

19. Briscoes vs Kevin Steen/El Generico ROH 4/14: I was shocked at how much I enjoyed this. I haven't had much to say about the IWS guys before, and I have actively hated Steen, but he seems to have ditched most of his crap and just become a fat asskicker. With his bad skin and flabby body he does look like every single guy in the audience though, I am guessing ROH books him for the same reason you book Pedro Morales in NYC, he is the regional babyface for fat wrestling dorks. With that I think this match was hurt a little by him working heel, you don't book Putski as a heel in Pittsburgh. The opening was great as Jay and Steen cheap shotting each other ruled, and Stevens was a total monster. The NO REMORE CORE beating up Stevens was fine, and the Rock and Rolls hurt partner comes out, is a great match layout. They did have the two on one go way too long, and really wasn't the beating it needed to be for Mark to risk his health. Jay has to be beaten to death, instead the match was 60/40, doesn't work if your brother defies doctors orders to turn 60/40 into 50/50. Still that was the only flaw as the end section was nuts, and Mark took the kind of sick bumps you need to get this over. Steen was great as a total fucker too, I think I am 180ing on that dude.

20. Colt Cabana v. Jimmy Jacobs ROH 2/24: This is one of the two blowoffs for the best angle in wrestling in the last decade, one could make an argument for Rey v. Eddie feud, but this was an amazing story executed amazing, while that was kind of stupid story executed amazingly. Cabana does an amazing opening promo which was like a serious Ric Flair promo mixed with a Hyman Roth speech. Jacobs and Lacey are then interviewed by ex Jacobs girlfriend Becky Bayless which added a little creepiness to it. As an aside, what happened to Becky Bayless? She was able to survive being an ECW rat and still have some youthfulness and prettiness in her, but apparently a semester abroad took it all out her, what happened to her in Paris? Did Chiwetel Ejifor cut out a kidney or something?

Match just starts amazing with both guys going after each other. Cabana busts open Jacobs with a dusty elbow and he reveals scissors in the elbow pad. They then really have the worlds greatest Tiger Jeet Singh match as they stab the shit out of each other with bunches of cool shit in cool ways. Jacobs breaks Cabana's Chicago flag over his back and stabs him in the face with the jagged wood and then wipes the blood off his face with the flag, which is a great "disrespect your local scene" spot. Also earlier in the match Cabana misses Jacobs and stabs the scissors

into the turnbuckle getting them stuck, then about ten minutes later he gets whipped into the corner and is able to pull the scissors out and uses them again, to counter a Jacobs attack it was a really nice piece of match layout.

While we were watching this, I said "This is going to be my number one, unless they have Brent Albright run in or something." Moments later in comes shitty HGH belly, tribal tattoo Albright to stink up the match. Whitmer runs in too, and we have shit city briefly, as Whitmer throws Lisa Simpson windmill punches on Albright. The match never really regained its momentum after that, as they moved from a Sheik match to a Sabu match, while the big table senton off a ladder was crazy, it took too long to set up, and didn't have the intensity of the parts that involved stabbing.

24. Matt Sydal vs The Man Gravity Forge PAC ROH 3/4: Matt Sydal maybe the best underdog babyface in wrestling, this match however he was playing arrogant heel champion, which I figure wouldn't work. Man was I wrong, as he was completely awesome. He took all of The Man Gravity Forge PAC's rana's and headscissors great, caught all of his big dives well, and had a bunch of signature bumps which would work with anyone. I especially loved his attempted top rope rana, which he missed and crotch'd himself. For a guy who works so well from the bottom, he is also really great working from the top and controlling, you rarely see someone who can do both equally as good. I would love to see him take the Open The Brave Gate title around the horn and work as touring heel champ against other green local juniors. The Man Gravity Forge PAC had some nice spots but you get the sense Sydal could have the same match with "The Ethereal" Sean Alty in North Carolina, Kid Mikaze in Boston, Ricochet in Chicago or Mistico in DF.

25. Davey Richards/Roderick Strong vs Jack Evans/Delirious ROH 4/14: Both Delirious and Evans are really great at simple face in peril tag wrestling, both in the ring taking beating, on the apron firing up their partner and coming into the match as a house of fire. I also love Evans street fight highflying, it wouldn't make any sense for him to be throwing blows so he comes right out to try to kill the guy with dives. I have to give NO REMORE CORE credit, as they were the only heels all night who didn't get face pops. Roderick especially is really great as PROVEN INNOCENT lacrosse date rapist. Davey still looks like he is performing pro-wrestling, rather than pro-wrestling. Still his "look at me I am a heel" stuff is less aggravating than his "look at me I am PURO JUNIOR SUPERSTAR" stuff. Built to some big near falls and I really bought that the underdogs were going to take the win.

John Cena vs Great Khali vs Umaga WWE 6/4: This was the last of the really fun Cena v. Khali series, and they added in Umaga to throw things and bump. Cena is typically great at taking a beating, and at this point has a ton of stuff he can do with both guys. After trying for a month we finally get an FU on Khali (that isn't on a crash pad), it looked really great too with tall ass Khali taking a cool awkward bump on the move. WWE does monster v. monster teases really well. The matches usually kind of stink, but the battle royal staredowns or in this case 2 minute 3 way dances are almost always great. I loved all of the Khali v. Umaga stuff, and the Samoan Spike

on Khali looked great. Honestly I don't think a singles match between those two would be any good, so it is probably better that Khali got moved, and they can save another face off for the Royal Rumble.

Mitsuhara Misawa vs Takuma Sano NOAH 4/28: Misawa is amazing as Eastwood in Unforgiven. He had retired to a comfortable life on the farm of undercard six-mans, and he gets drawn back for one final gunfight. Sano just mauls him early, the spin kick to the stomach is such a nasty move, it looks totally painful and Misawa does an incredible job of selling like he is passing a kidney stone. When he finally makes his comeback it wasn't really a no-sell, it was more like a boxer who tastes a guy power in early rounds, he knows he can survive it now and can make the decision to keep going. They did an amazing job in all of the set up matches establishing the spin kick to the head as a killer move. So the crowd was big into every time it was teased and Misawa really tried to avoid it. Unfortunately when it finally gets hit Sano kind of hits him with the inner part of the leg, not with the foot. It sort of denied Sano the big hot nearfall he needed. The ending did fall a little flat, Sano really beats on Misawa from pillar to post, and it really seems like he went down kind of early. The neckbreaker was pretty nasty looking, but Hirayanagi was kicking out of things that looked as bad in the opener.

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I even think you hate me when you call me on the phone
And sometimes when we go out I wish I'd stayed at home
SINGLE GOING STEADY
And when I'm dreaming or just lying in my bed
I think you've got it in for me
Is it all in my head is it in my head
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!@!@!@!@!@!@!@!@!@ THE STEINERS vs ARN ANDERSON/ STEVE AUSTIN- WCW SATURDAY NIGHT- 6/13/1992: This was on my hard drive at work THUS I will review it and continue on with the endless evaluation of the career of Scott Steiner, underrated wrestler. Arn and Scott Steiner start first and Scotty is the technical master and Arn is king-sized playing the panicked outclassed heel role. He's fuckin Arn Anderson, you know exactly what I'm talking about. Arn cheats and wins a knuckle-lock OR DOES HE?!?! Steiner bridges up and flips to offense but Arn knees him in the stomach to cut him off but is then cut off by Steiners reverse of the running of the ropes into a spinning backbreaker. Rick tags in and Arn is in the corner looking befuddled and exasperated and fearlessly runs into a body slam. Austin tags in and overpowers Rick and Austin's need to hang with Steiner leads to him eating a Steiner lariat and allowing Scott back in. Austin bulls him into the corner and the Beating Of Scotty begins. Scotty misses a dropkick, dodges Arn's clothesline, misses a clotheline and...yes... bumps like a fucking maniac to the floor. They drag him back in and Austin stomps on him for a while. Scotty is busted up but is trying to fight out of an Anderson bearhug, getting the crowd RnR Xpress level hot. After a commercial (assuredly for Alka-Seltzer if I remember correctly), Austin is wearing him down and Scotty tries to punch his way out but dives for the neutral corner and Austin crushes him with an elbow across the back of the neck. Arn charges the corner and

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